

# THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Church of Rome, by the Authority she Pretends, may give us a New Gospel.
2. She wou'd be more Infallible than the Apostles, or Angels of Heaven.
3. And by this, plainly Undermines the Faith.
4. Unless I am Infallible my self, I can never be Sure of the Infallibility of the Church of Rome.
5. The Logomachy of the Words Judge and Judgement.
6. The Judgement of Discretion does not Determine the thing, but the Judgement of Authority do's.

SATURDAY, April 10. 1708.

(1.) *Country-man.* **I**T seems Plain to me, Master, That what the Church of Rome pretends to, to make; the Truth of the Scriptures, and our Faith, Depend upon the Authority of their Church, Proves too much for them, for it Proves more than they are willing to own, that is; That if the Church gave us New Scriptures, and a New Faith, we are Oblig'd to Receive them; because they wou'd then stand upon the same Authority as the Old ones, that is, the Authority of the Church.

(2.) *Rehearsal.* I am Glad to see you take the Argument so Right, Country-man. And now to Try you further, I will give you the Answer the Church of Rome makes to this, and see how you can Defend what you have said. They say then, That it is Impossible the Church shou'd give Us New Scriptures, or a New Faith, because she cannot Err, and therefore that such a Supposition is Absurd, and they will not give you leave to make it.

*Country-m.* Is it more Absurd than what the Apostles said of themselves? Gal. i. 8, 9. Though we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have Preached unto you, let him be Accursed. May we not then say the same of any Church upon Earth? But if the Church of Rome say not as the Apostles did, it will follow they Preach not the same Doctrine, or the same Ground of Faith as the Apostles did. And it is plain in this, That the Apostles set up only as Witnesses to the Truth of the Gospel, of what Christ had Done, and Taught. This is Evidence, not Authority. Therefore

well might they say, If We, or an Angel from Heaven shou'd Preach any other Gospel let him be Accursed. For the Truth of the Gospel of Christ stands not on the Authority of Men or Angels. It wou'd be Blasphemy to say it. And is it not the same Blasphemy to say that our Faith stands on the Authority of the Church of Rome! Is it Absurd then to make such a Supposition as to the Church of Rome, which the Apostles made as to Themselves, and even as to Angels of Heaven! It wou'd be Absurd indeed, if we go upon the Argument of Authority, and not upon Evidence; for if our Faith stand upon the Authority of whatever Church, then we are to Receive as Faith whatever that Church shou'd Propose to us as such. And it wou'd be Absurd to say she Cou'd Err in Faith, when her Authority makes it Faith.

(3.) *Rehearsal.* You have Answer'd fully and clearly, Country-man. And if the Church of Rome wou'd lay by her Authority as to Matters of Faith, and be content to stand only as an Evidence of it, as the Apostles did, our Disputes with her wou'd sooner be at an End. And a True Evidence wou'd never be Afraid of being Examin'd Strictly and very Particularly, for the Truth wou'd still appear the more. But when instead of an Evidence, the Church of Rome will needs be a Judge in Matters of Faith, and Interpose her Authority, and will not Suffer it to be Disputed, she truly Undermines the Faith, and Renders it all Precarious; as well as Exposes her own Guilt, in thus Endeavouring to stop the Examination of what she has Deliver'd as of Faith, and Answers every Enquiry with, Who shall be Judge?

(4.)

(4.) *Country-m.* And who shall be Judge of that Judge? For if I believe any one to be Judge, I must believe it upon some Reason or other. And if that Reason be not Good, I am Deceiv'd. So that if I be not Infallible my self, I can never be Sure that I Judge Right in the Choice of a Judge. And my Belief of the Infallibility of any other, cannot Rise Higher than the Reason of my Belief. So that upon the whole, I am left still to Judge for my self. As you said at the beginning, even as to the Belief of a God. And if in that, then surely as to what Religion or Church I shou'd be of. For I wou'd ask, Who is Judge, among Christians, Jews, Mahometans, and Heathens, which of all these Sorts is in the Right? It wou'd be Ridiculous for any of them to say to the others, my Church is Judge, for the Rest think their Churches as good as his, and Better. And indeed in all matters of Opinion or Belief it is a perfect Contradiction to ask, who shall be Judge? You may as well say, who is Judge what I shall Think? They say, Thoughts are Free. And it is impossible for a Man to be of any other Opinion than his own. Unless he is Convinc'd by Reason, and then he can as little help the Changing his Opinion. It is his own Opinion still. A Man cannot do otherwise than Think as he is Persuaded, tho' for many Reasons he may Dissemble it. When a Man offers me Reasons why the Church of Rome, or any other, is an Infallible Judge, do's he not make me Judge of those Reasons? Why else do's he offer them to me? So that the whole Results to my own Reason still. And this Grand Question, Who shall be Judge? Has just left me where it found me.

(5.) *Rehears.* As I told you at the Beginning of the last Volume, when we enter'd upon the Controversy with the Presbyterians, That the whole of their Dispute did Turn upon the Jingle of the two words, Episcopacy and Presbytery, both of which might be taken in the Same and in Different Senses: So in this Dispute with the Church of Rome, of Who shall be Judge? The whole Turns upon as Poor a Logomachy or Strife of Words, that is, of the word Judge or Judgment. For, as I told you before, there is a Judgment of Discretion or Opinion, and a Judgment of Authority, which Determines the Cause before it. And these two sort of Judgments are *roto Calo* Different, as Distant as the East is from the West, tho' the words Judge or Judgment are the same, which may Deceive some unwary People. But I hope I have made it Evident, that as the Belief of a God, and of all the other Articles in the Creed,

must be Receiv'd by the Judgment of Discretion, of which God alone is Judge: So that to Submit our Faith to any Judgment of Authority in any Man or Men, is to submit Divine things, and God Himself to Human Judgment, which is Highly Blasphemous.

(6.) *Country-m.* But do you not Submit these things to the Judgment of Discretion? Since you say we Believe these things by it.

*Rehears.* No. The Judgment of Discretion is only the Means by which we Believe. As the Eye is that by which I See. My Eye may be Faulty, and I may see Wrong. But yet I can be no surer of what I See, than I am of the Truth of my Sight. But this is only as to my self, not as to the thing that I See, which Remains the Same, whether I See it Right or not. Thus many Men have false Notions of God, but this being only an Opinion or Judgment of Discretion, has Effect only as to these Men, not at all as to the Being of a God, or the Truth of any other Article of Faith. But if I have a Judgment of Authority, to Determine of these things, then I am Superior to them, and they are to be Believ'd upon my Authority, which is the Blasphemy I spoke of.

*Country-m.* Now I see Clearly, That as I cannot be surer of the Being of a God, than I am of those Reasons that Persuade me to Believe it: Far less can I believe the Infallibility of any Church, but upon my own Reason. And I can no more Believe by the Judgment of Another, than I can See with another Mans Eyes.

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